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COMMUNITY-ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP TOOLKIT

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Characteristics of Quality Community-Engaged Scholarship

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- 2. Adequate Preparation in Content Area and Grounding in the Community**
- 3. Appropriate Methods: Rigor and Community Engagement**
- 4. Significant Results: Impact on the Field and the Community**
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Community-Campus Partnerships for Health has led the way in producing resources on community-engaged scholarship. The following resources are reproduced from: Jordan C (Editor). Community-Engaged Scholarship Review, Promotion & Tenure Package. Peer Review Workgroup, Community-Engaged Scholarship for Health Collaborative, Community-Campus Partnerships for Health, 2007. Copyright © 2007, Community-Campus Partnerships for Health. This report may be reproduced in whole or in part as long as it is properly cited.

WHAT IS "COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT"?

Community engagement is "the application of institutional resources to address and solve challenges facing communities through

collaboration with these communities." (Commission on Community-Engaged Scholarship in the Health Professions. Linking Scholarship and Communities. Seattle, WA: Community-Campus Partnerships for Health, 2005.)

HOW IS ENGAGEMENT DIFFERENT FROM "OUTREACH"?

Outreach has traditionally been associated with the dissemination of information to public audiences. Such dissemination has taken numerous forms but it is typically one-way communication rather than an exchange. Engagement implies a partnership and a two-way exchange of information, ideas, and expertise as well as shared decision making.

WHAT MAKES AN ACTIVITY "SCHOLARSHIP"?

The following list of characteristics of scholarship is adapted from *Recognizing Faculty Work*, by Robert Diamond and Bronwyn Adam (1993):

- The activity requires a high level of discipline expertise.
- The activity breaks new ground or is innovative.
- The activity can be replicated and elaborated.
- The work and its results can be documented.
- The work and its results can be peer reviewed.
- The activity has significance or impact.

More simply stated, scholarship is work that is public, peer reviewed and available in a platform that others may build on. Faculty take a scholarly approach when they systematically design, implement, assess and redesign an activity, drawing from the literature and best practices in the field (Association of American Medical Colleges, *Advancing Educators and Education: Defining the Components and Evidence of Educational Scholarship*).

Scholarship is, at its heart, about contributing to a body of knowledge. Such contributions could be in the form of the creation of new knowledge or the dissemination of knowledge.

Creation of knowledge is not just research. Integrating existing knowledge in new ways, making linkages, applying knowledge in new ways, or coming up with new methods would also be considered part of creating knowledge. Simply conducting a research project might not be considered scholarly unless the project results are documented, able to be reviewed by peers (including practitioners, policy makers, community members, etc. if appropriate) and disseminated.

Dissemination is not just publishing. It is teaching and consulting, community talks, legislative testimony, media presentations, etc. Dissemination is about putting knowledge in the public domain.

WHAT IS "COMMUNITY-ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP"?

Community-engaged scholarship (CES) involves the faculty member in a mutually beneficial partnership with the community and results in scholarship deriving from teaching, discovery, integration, application or engagement.

HOW IS COMMUNITY-ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP DIFFERENT FROM "SERVICE"?

Community-engaged scholarship integrates engagement with the community into research and teaching activities (broadly defined). Engagement is a feature of these scholarly activities, not a separate activity. Service implies offering one's expertise and effort to the institution, the discipline or the community, but it lacks the core qualities of scholarship.

WHAT IS "EVIDENCE" AND WHAT IS "DOCUMENTATION"?

The reader will see that in the section below on Characteristics of Quality Community-Engaged Scholarship, each description of a characteristic is followed by a set of bullets about evidence of that characteristic. This section is followed by a discussion of documentation. What's the difference? Evidence includes the behaviors, activities, and qualities consistent with a given

characteristic. Documentation is how the scholar presents that evidence in a dossier.

CHARACTERISTICS OF QUALITY COMMUNITY-ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP

Note: These characteristics are drawn and adapted from these sources: Portland State University Promotion and Tenure guidelines, University of Washington School of Public Health and Community Medicine Promotion and Tenure guidelines, National Review Board for the Scholarship of Engagement guidelines, and Glassick C, Huber M and Maeroff G, Scholarship Assessed: Evaluation of the Professoriate, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1997.

Quality and significance of scholarship are the primary criteria for determining faculty promotion and tenure. Quality and significance of scholarship are overarching, integrative concepts that apply equally to the expressions of scholarship as they may appear in various disciplines and to accomplishments resulting from various forms of faculty work, such as research and teaching. For more information on community-engaged scholarship and faculty promotion and tenure, see our **Tenure and Promotion** page.

A consistently high quality of scholarship, and its promise for future exemplary scholarship, is more important than the quantity of the work done. *The following 8 characteristics are intended as the basis for the evaluation of the quality and significance of Community-Engaged Scholarship (CES):*

1. Clear Academic and Community Change Goals

A scholar should clearly define objectives of scholarly work and clearly state basic questions of inquiry. Clarity of purpose provides a critical context for evaluating scholarly work.

Evidence of clear goals includes:

- Clearly stating the basic purpose of the work and its value for public good
- Defining goals and objectives that are realistic and achievable

- Identifying intellectual and significant questions in the discipline and in the community
- Articulating one's program of research and objectives
- Articulating one's goals for teaching and student learning

2. Adequate Preparation in Content Area and Grounding in the Community

A scholar must be well-prepared and knowledgeable about developments in his or her field. The ability to educate others and conduct meaningful work depends upon mastering existing knowledge.

Evidence of adequate preparation and grounding in the community includes:

- Investing time and effort in developing community partnerships
- Participating in training and professional development that builds skills and competencies in CES or specific models such as service learning, community-based participatory research, or public health practice.
- Demonstrating an understanding of relevant existing scholarship

3. Appropriate Methods: Rigor and Community Engagement

Meaningful scholarly work must always be conducted with appropriate rigor. In the case of research, rigor facilitates valid research design, data collection, as well as interpretation and reporting of results, so that valid conclusions can be drawn from the findings. In the case of teaching, rigor ensures that teaching methods and curriculum are grounded in practices known to produce student learning outcomes and in appropriate theoretical frames and research-based evidence.

In many instances the engagement of communities can enhance rigor and facilitate the study of issues and research questions that would not be as effectively studied apart from such communities (for example, research related to health disparities). Community engagement can also enhance the rigor of teaching and facilitate understanding of environmental,

sociological, and political contexts of issues or theories treated in the classroom. Therefore it is imperative for community-engaged scholars to provide evidence to demonstrate that rigor is maintained, or even enhanced, through community engaged approaches.

Evidence of scientific rigor and community engagement includes:

- Enhancing curriculum by incorporating updated and real world information from community members critical to student learning of course material.
- Deepening and contextualizing the learning experience in a course by involving community experts in design and implementation
- Leveraging funds for course development or a research project as a result of community involvement
- Revising curriculum and community placement with community partner based on student feedback and community partner observation.
- Refining a research question, or confirming its validity, through co-generation with community partner
- Involving the community in grant management, fiscal control and accountability to increase community support for the success of the work.
- Involving the community to improve study design – including: improving or reinforcing the conceptual framework; creating better understanding and characterization of study variables; and improving acceptability to the community, ultimately resulting in increased study validity
- Using community member input to enhance plans for recruitment and retention of study participants
- Utilizing community member feedback to improve the design of measurement instruments and/or collection of data
- Involving community members in interpretation of data allowing deeper understanding of the study's findings
- Developing policy recommendations and application or intervention ideas based on study's findings through brainstorming with community partners.

- Disseminating findings more broadly through partnership with community organizations
- Improving ethical credibility by directly addressing specific issues/concerns with the community.
- Reducing potential for faculty presuppositions through learning from community partners.

4. Significant Results: Impact on the Field and the Community

Scholars should evaluate whether or not they achieve their goals and whether or not this achievement had an important impact on and is used by others. A primary goal of community-engaged scholarship is to beneficially impact the communities in which such scholarship is conducted. The assessment of CES impact must go beyond just the reporting of positive, neutral, or negative outcomes of any given project. The scholar should explicitly state what knowledge they created or applied and what impact it has had or may likely have in the future. It is important to note here that "significant results" is intended to be broadly defined and not only "statistically significant results."

Evidence of significant results/impact includes:

- The community contributing to as well as benefiting from the research or learning project
- Making progress towards social equity
- Changing health policy
- Improving community health processes or outcomes
- Securing increased funding to continue, expand or replicate the initial project or course
- Securing increased funding for community partners
- Increasing capacity of individuals in the community and community organizations to advocate for themselves
- Enhancing the ability of trainees or students to assume positions of leadership and community engagement
- Utilizing the work to add consequentially to the discipline and to the community
- Opening up additional areas for further exploration and collaboration through the work

- Utilizing the work to make a contribution consistent with the purpose and target of the work over a period of time
- Disseminating geographically limited work with clear discussion as to its generalizability to other populations or as a model that can be further investigated in other settings

5. Effective Presentation/Dissemination to Academic and Community Audiences

Central to scholarly pursuits is the effective presentation and dissemination of results. Scholars should possess effective oral and written communication skills that enable them to convert knowledge into language that a public audience can understand. Scholars should communicate with appropriate audiences and subject their ideas to critical inquiry and independent review.

Evidence of effective presentation and dissemination includes:

- Publishing research results or teaching innovations in peer-reviewed journals, practitioner journals, professional journals
Publishing in periodicals or newspapers read by community members
- Disseminating information through other media used by community members, practitioners or policy makers (radio, newsletters, podcasts, etc.)
- Utilizing video, computer or distance programs that reach community
- Producing policy documents directed towards service providers, policy makers or legislators
- Presenting at community events
- Co-authoring any of the above with community partners

6. Reflective Critique: Lessons Learned to Improve the Scholarship and Community Engagement

Community-engaged scholars should demonstrate an ability to critically reflect on their work, their community partnerships, the issues and challenges that arise and how they are able to address these (for example, issues of power, resources, capacity,

racism, etc). Community-engaged scholars should demonstrate an ability to consider such questions as: why did this project succeed or fail to achieve its intended outcomes; what could be done differently in succeeding projects to improve outcomes; is this project an idea that is deserving of further time and effort?

Evidence of reflective critique includes:

- Conducting debriefing sessions with community members
- Seeking evaluations from community members
- Changing project or course design based on feedback and lessons learned
- Engaging in personal reflection concerning, for example, issues of privilege or racism

7. Leadership and Personal Contribution

One of the most consistent criteria for promotion or tenure in the academy is evidence of a national or international reputation. Community-engaged scholars should demonstrate, within their discipline, within the arena of community-engaged scholarship, or both, that their work has earned them a reputation for rigor, impact and the capacity to move the discipline or community change work forward. In addition, community-engaged scholars should demonstrate an ability to serve in leadership roles.

Evidence of leadership and personal contribution includes:

- Receiving invitations to present to professional society meetings, national or international conferences
- Receiving invitations to present to community audiences
- Receiving invitations to testify before legislative bodies
- Receiving invitations to appear in the media
- Receiving invitations to serve on advisory or policy-making committee at national, regional, state and/or community levels
- Receiving invitations to serve on editorial boards
- Directing community-based activities
- Organizing partnerships with community organizations to improve health

- Receiving awards or letters of appreciation from community-based organizations for contributions to community health
- Mentoring students, junior faculty and community partners
- Being asked to be a peer observer of colleague's teaching

8. Consistently Ethical Behavior: Socially Responsible Conduct of Research and Teaching

Consistently ethical behavior links scholarship to personal virtues. This reference suggests that scholarly work must be conducted with honesty, integrity, perseverance and courage. Ethical behavior considers that scholars will foster a respectful relationship with students, community participants, peers, and others who participate in or benefit from their work. Ethical behavior ensures the responsible conduct of research and the respectful engagement of communities and individuals to conduct research and teaching. Ethical behavior must consider cultural or community implications as well as university policies.

Evidence of consistently ethical behavior includes:

- Cultivating the conduct of "good science", sound research techniques and appropriate engaged pedagogies that result in meaningful and beneficial contributions to communities.
- Following the human subject review process and all other policies concerning the responsible conduct of research when conducting research projects, and specifically subjecting work to a community IRB or a university IRB committee focused on community based research, if these exist
- Engaging communities in a respectful manner
- Recognizing and valuing community knowledge systems and incorporating them into the research process and courses as appropriate
- Acknowledging that customs and practices vary from one cultural community to the next and therefore should not be assumed when initially engaging a community
- Approaching communities as mutual partners to foster trusting, equitable relationships
- Focusing scholarly work on community assets not deficiencies, allowing community members to take active, meaningful roles in

research and courses, not for example, simply serving as research subjects. The goal is to maintain an open, trusting relationship—one that empowers the community and reflects a true partnership.

- Appropriately involving community partners in writing and reviewing products of the scholarship before they are published or otherwise disseminated.
- Appropriately acknowledging community partners when writing, presenting, etc about the collaborative work.



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